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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted by Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), in North Carolina, to determine the perceptions of employers of CPCC graduates regarding the graduates' level of preparation. Questionnaires were sent to 160 employers who had CPCC graduates in positions related to their graduates' academic programs and for whom graduates had given permission to contact. Responses were received from 104 employers for a responses rate of 65%. Study findings included the following: (1) when comparing CPCC graduates to other entering employees, 92.4% of the employers rated CPCC graduates as good or very good in terms of their ability to learn on the job, 91.4% rated them as good or very good on their attitude toward work, and 88.6% did so with respect to both their ability to work with others and their preparedness; (2) employers ranked CPCC graduates the lowest with respect to writing skills, with 80.8% rating graduates as good or very good, and oral/listening skills, with 78% rating them as such; (3) communications skills were also mentioned frequently in the comment section as an area needing additional training; (4) 95.2% said that they would hire another CPCC graduate "without reservation" and 4.8% indicated that they would hire another CPCC graduate, but "with reservation"; and (5) areas for improvement cited by employers included ensuring that training utilizes the latest technology and emphasizing on-the-job training and practical experience. (A list of employers is appended.) (KP)

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Central Piedmont
Community College

Employers of Graduates Study
1994



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Planning & Research
October 1994

Central Piedmont
Community College

Employers of Graduates Study
1994

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October 1994

CENTRAL PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

EMPLOYERS OF GRADUATES STUDY

ABSTRACT

In the summer of 1994 a questionnaire was sent to 160 employers who had Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) graduates (1991-92 or 1992-93) in positions related to the graduates' academic programs. Of those surveys, 104 were returned for a 65 percent response rate. Employers were asked to focus on the effectiveness of CPCC in preparing the employee for employment. The replies offered some important information for further consideration.

One hundred percent of the employers said they would hire another CPCC graduate (95.2 percent without reservations). In the open ended questions there were many positive comments about the programs.

Employers indicated that CPCC-trained employees, compared to the preparation of other entering employees, were well prepared. The item relating to overall preparation had a mean of 4.4 on a scale of 1 to 5. Ratings on this item showed 44.3 percent "very good" and 44.3 percent "good."

Employers gave high ratings to all of the items. The two items with the highest ratings were "Ability to learn on the job" and "Attitude toward work" (both had means of 4.5).

Employers gave the lowest rating to preparation in the communications skills area of oral/listening skills (mean=4.1). Communication skills were also mentioned frequently in the comment section as an area for additional training.

Also emerging frequently from the comments was the advice to utilize the latest technology and to feature on-the-job/practical experience.

EMPLOYERS OF GRADUATES STUDY

The 1991-93 Graduate Follow-up Study asked graduates to give permission for CPCC to contact their employer regarding their preparation for employment. Employers were contacted if the following conditions were met: 1) the graduate gave permission to contact them, 2) the graduate was employed full-time, and 3) the graduate's job was either directly or somewhat related to his/her CPCC program of study.

The employer questionnaire was sent to 160 employers; 104 (65 percent) responded. Employers were asked questions that related to how well CPCC prepared graduates for the job, thus focusing on CPCC's educational effectiveness, not on the individual employee's performance, although the two are inherently related. Employers were asked to rate employee preparation in areas such as familiarity with equipment, specific job skills, work attitude, and general education/critical thinking skills. An open ended item asked the employer to "describe how CPCC can better help you with the training of employees."

Is the employee's college program related to the employee's current job?

The first question confirmed that the employee's job was related to the program of study. When asked if the employee's job was related to the program of study at CPCC, 74.5 percent of the employers judged that the job and education were closely related, and 18.4 percent judged that they were somewhat related (Table 1.)

Table 1.
Relationship Of Job And Program Of Study.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Relationship			
Closely Related	73	74.5	74.5
Somewhat Related	18	18.4	92.9
Not Related	6	6.1	99.0
Don't Know	1	1.0	100.0

Missing=6

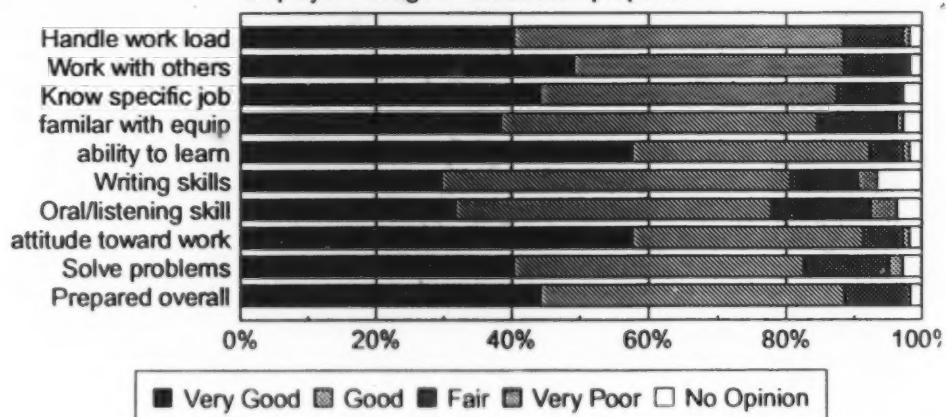
Compared to other entering employees, how well did CPCC prepare graduates for their job?

In rating the job preparation of CPCC graduates, employers used a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being "very good," 4="good," 3="fair," 2="very poor," and 1="no opinion." Responses for "no opinion" are not used in the calculation of mean scores. Results are shown in Figure 1 and Table 2.

The percentage of responses in the "very good" and "good" categories account for the great majority of responses to every item, with total percentages in those two categories ranging from a low of 78.0 percent for oral/listening skills to a high of 92.4 percent for ability to learn on the job. The total percentage of "very good" and "good" responses for all the categories, in order of magnitude are:

- . ability to learn on the job (92.4 percent)
- . attitude toward work (91.4 percent)
- . ability to work with others (88.6 percent)
- . overall, how well prepared is this candidate (88.6 percent)
- . handle normal work load efficiently (88.5 percent)
- . knowledge of specific technical job skills (87.6 percent)
- . familiarity with equipment (84.7 percent)
- . ability to solve problems related to job (82.7 percent)
- . writing skills (80.8 percent)
- . oral/listening skills (78.0 percent)

Figure 1.
Employer Ratings of Graduates' preparation.



With mean scores of 4.5, ability to learn on the job and attitude toward work have the highest mean ratings (Table 2). Following are mean scores for all the categories in order of magnitude.

- . ability to learn on the job (mean=4.5)
- . attitude toward work (mean=4.5)
- . ability to work with others (mean=4.4)
- . knowledge of specific technical job skills (mean=4.4)
- . overall, how well prepared is this graduate (mean=4.4)
- . handle normal work load efficiently (mean=4.3)
- . familiarity with equipment (mean=4.3)
- . writing skills (mean=4.2)
- . ability to solve problems related to job (mean=4.2)
- . oral listening skills (mean=4.1)

Table 2.
Employer ratings of graduates' preparation.

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Very Poor	No Opinion	Mean
Handle work load	42	50	9	1	2	4.3
Work with others	51	41	10	0	2	4.4
Know of job skills	46	45	10	0	3	4.4
Familiar with equip	40	48	12	1	3	4.3
Learn on the job	60	36	5	1	2	4.5
Writing skills	31	53	10	3	2	4.2
Oral/listening skill	33	48	15	4	4	4.1
Attitude toward work	60	35	6	1	2	4.5
Solve problems	42	44	13	2	3	4.2
Overall preparation	46	46	10	0	2	4.4

Table 3 presents employer responses by program for the item "Overall, how well prepared is this graduate." This item is a global measure of the preparation of the graduate and is used as a summary indicator. Due to the small number of observations for many of the programs, care should be taken when making comparisons among programs.

Table 3.								
Responses to the Item "Overall, How Well Prepared Is This Graduate?"								
		Very			Very	No		
	Program	Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Opinion		
Program	Code	No (%)	No (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	Mean	N
Assoc Science Deg	C050	2(67)	0(0)	1(33)	0(0)	0(0)	4.3	3
Col Transfer	C011	0(0)	1(50)	0(0)	0(0)	1(50)	4	2
Gen Ed , Undecided	G301	5(56)	4(44)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4	1
Bus Admin	T018	0(0)	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4	1
Comp Prog	T022	2(67)	1(33)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4.7	3
Graphic Arts	T026	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	2
Secretary	T030	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	1
Civil Eng	T038	0(0)	2(67)	1(25)	0(0)	1(25)	3.7	4
Arch Tech	T041	0(0)	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4	2
Elec Eng	T044	0(0)	0(0)	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	3	1
Med Records	T053	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	1
Dental Hygiene	T054	2(29)	4(57)	1(14)	0(0)	0(0)	4.1	7
Medical Asst.	T058	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	2
Assoc Deg Nurs	T059	5(36)	8(57)	1(7)	0(0)	0(0)	4.3	14
Physical Ther	T062	1(25)	2(50)	0(0)	0(0)	1(25)	4.3	4
Law Enforcement	T064	1(50)	1(50)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4.5	2
Commercial Art	T040	0(0)	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4	1
Early Childhood	T073	2(40)	3(60)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4.4	5
Food Service	T074	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	1
Interior Design	T077	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	1
Respiratory Ther	T091	1(33)	1(33)	1(33)	0(0)	0(0)	4	3
Corrections	T102	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	1
Social Services Asst	T107	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	3	1
Para-Legal Tech	T120	0(0)	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4	1
Survey Tech	T125	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	1
Auto Serv Tech	T156	0(0)	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	3
Auto Tech	T176	0(0)	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4	2
Microcomp Sys	T192	0(0)	0(0)	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	3	1
Tech, Undecided	T301	2(50)	2(50)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4.5	4
Dental Asst.	V011	0(0)	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4	2
Computer Oper	V012	0(0)	3(75)	0(0)	0(0)	1(25)	4	4
Machinist	V032	0(0)	0(0)	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	3	1
Med Transcribing	V127	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5	1
Data Entry	V129	0(0)	1(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4	1

Would employers hire another CPCC graduate?

Employers were asked if they would hire another CPCC graduate. As shown by Table 4, they were very positive in responding to this question, with 99 (95.2 percent) answering "Yes, definitely." The balance (5, or 4.8 percent) answered "Yes, with reservation." None of the employers said "No."

Table 4.
Would Hire Another CPCC Graduate.

	Frequency	Percent	Cum. Percent
Item			
Yes, definitely	99	95.2	95.2
Yes, with reserv.	5	4.8	100.0
No	0	0.0	100.0

How can CPCC better help you with the training of employees?

When asked how the College could help with the training of employees, 51 (48.2 percent) of the respondents made comments. Many of the comments were complimentary; none were critical. Some of the comments made specific suggestions regarding curricula. A great many of the comments fell into the following recurring categories of suggestions:

- . teach more communication skills
- . ensure that the program has the latest technology
- . stress hands-on, on-the-job, practical experience
- . teach loyalty to the employer

These comments have been compiled by program and will be made available to the Vice President for Instruction and appropriate deans and department heads.

Will employers give CPCC further help in specific ways?

This final question asked if employers could be contacted to help in five areas of need. As presented in Table 5, many employers indicated a willingness to help in one or more of these areas. Employers indicating a willingness to serve will be sent letters by appropriate college personnel.

Table 5.
Employers Willing to Serve.

Item	Yes Freq.	Percent
Serve on Program Advisory Comm.	36	48.1
Placement of co-op interns	49	61.2
Job placement of graduates	53	67.1
Work with the CPCC Foundation	18	26.9
Serve on Training Advisory Comm.	25	36.2

□

Appendix A

Listing of Employers

ASSOC SCIENCE (C050)
STIMATOR
CHAR/MECK UTIL DEPT

LPN
NALLE CLINIC

ASST LABORATORY FACI
SCIENCE, CPCC

COL TRAN UNDEC (C301)
CERTIFIED MEDICAL ASST
CHARLOTTE ORTHO SPEC

TECH UNDECIDED
PEDC TRAINING TECH
US POSTAL SERVICE

GENERAL ED (G020)
WORD PROCESSOR
SMITH HELMS MULLIS &
MOORE

GEN ED UNDEC (G301)
RESPIRATORY THERAPIST
GASTON MEM HOSP

CERTIFIED MED ASST
CAROLINA MED CENTER

SECRETARY
STAR LINEAR SYSTEMS

AUTO MECHANIC I
CITY OF CHAR

CERTIFIED MEDICAL ASST
DR. JERRY JONES

LIEUTENANT/INVESTIGAT
UNC-C DEPT OF POL & PUB

LPN
PROVIDENCE CONV HOME

SECRETARY/OFF MGR
INTEGRATED ENG SER, PA

PROGRAMMER/ANALYST
HEART CORP

UNKNOWN PROGRAM
MARKETING ASSISTANT
FESA TAPE INC

BOOKKEEPER/TRANSCR
TEEN HLTH CONNECTION

CERTIFIED MED ASST
CHARLOTTE ORTHO SPEC

ADJUNCT SECRETARY
CPCC

CERTIFIED MEDICAL ASST
NORTHCROSS FAM PHYSIC

CERTIFIED MEDICAL ASST
UNIV FAMILY PHYSICIANS

CLINICAL SECRETARY
CAREMARK, INC

TRAFFIC ELEC TECH II
CITY OF CHARLOTTE

MEDICAL RECORD MGR
UNION CO MENT HEALTH

LEAD TECHNICIAN
PENSKE TRUCK LEASING

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASST
CATAWBA REHAB SERV

REALTOR/PARALEGAL
ALLEN TATE REALTORS

SEC TO DIR OF CIR
CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

BUSINESS ADMIN (T018)
LEGAL SECRETARY
WARREN, CARTER &

COMP PROG BASIC (T022)
JUNIOR PROGRAMMER
FOOD LION

PROGRAMMER ANALYST
COMPUTING SERV, CPCC

LAB FAC./MAINFRAME
AS400 CPCC

GRAPHIC ARTS (T026)
PRE-PRESS/STRIPPER
MAJOR BUSINESS FORMS

GRAPHIC DES ENGINEER
ERPI NDE CENTER

SEC/EXEC (T030)
SECRETARY
CORP & CONT ED CPCC

CIVIL ENG TECH (T038)
OPER CO-ORDINATOR
CITY OF CHARLOTTE

DRAFTSMAN
MCCULLOCH-ENGLAND

REGIS LAND SURVEYOR
WILL J. VANDERLIP

REINFRG STEEL DETAILER
FLORIDA STEEL CORP

ARCH TECH (T041)
DRAFTER
PERICTON ENGINEERING

DRAFTING/ENGINEERING
ACOUSTICS INC

ELEC ENG TECH (T044)
TECHNICAL ASSISTANT
DUKE POWER CO

MED REC TECH (T053)
CODING ANALYST
MERCY HOSPITAL SOUTH

DENTAL HYGIENE (T054)
DENTAL HYGIENIST
LOWRY DENTISTRY

DENTAL HYGIENIST
DR. DARRELL CURRENT

REGIS DENT HYGIENIST
BAKER FAM DENT PRAC

DENTAL HYGIENIST
DR. DAN CARROLL

DENTAL HYGIENIST
FRANK E. JONES, D.D.S

DENTAL HYGIENIST
DEMETRIOS G. POURLOS

REGIS DENTAL HYGIENIST
DR. ARTLE COOPER

MEDICAL ASSISTING (T058)
CERT MEDICAL ASST
CHARLOTTE ORTHO SPEC

MEDICAL ASSISTANT
ARBORTEUM PEDIATRICS

ASSOC DEG NURS (T059)
RN
CAROLINA MED CENTER

RN-STAFF NURSE
CABARRUS MEM HOSPITAL

REGISTERED NURSE
CABARRUS MEM HOSP

STAFF NURSE
HOSPICE OF UNION CO

RN/ONCOLOGY GYN DEPT
CAROLINA MED CENTER

RN - CHANGE NURSE
CARRINGTON PLACE

RN
METROLINA KIDNEY

RN
UNION MEM HOSPITAL

RN
CAROLINA MED CENTER

RN
PRES ORTHOPEDIC HOSP

RN
CABARRUS MEM HOSPITAL

RN
PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL

RN
CMHA-UH

RN
CAROLINA MED CENTER

PHYSICAL THERAPY (T062)
PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASST
REHAB ADVANTAGE

LICEN PHYS THER ASST
COUNTY MEM HOSPITAL

LICEN PHYS THERAPIST
FORSYTH MEM HOSPITAL

LICEN PHYS THER ASST
CAROLINA BONE & JOINT

LAW ENFORCE (T064)
DEPUTY SHERIFF
UNION CO SHERIFF OFFICE

COMMERCIAL ART (T070)
GRAPHIC ARTIST
NEW TECH GRAPHICS

EARLY CHILDHOOD (T073)
TEACHER
PRESB WEEKDAY SCHOOL

DAYCARE DIRECTOR
CHAR JEWISH PRESCHOOL

TEACHER ASSISTANT
KANNAPOLIS HEADSTART

LEAD TEACHER
CHRIST LUTH CHIL CNTR

FOOD SERVICE (T074)
CATERING SUPERVISOR
PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL

INTERIOR DESIGN (T077)
OPERATIONS/MANAGER
THE LAMP PLACE

RESPIRATORY THER (T091)
REGISTERED RESP THER
MERCY HOSPITALS

RESPIRATORY THERAPIST
MERCY HOSPITAL

REGISTERED RESP THER
PIEDMONT MEDICAL CNTR

CORRECTIONS (T102)
DEPARTMENT SECRETARY
CPCC/ADVANCE STUDIES

SOCIAL SERV ASST (T107)
CONTINUING CARE COUNS
CHAR HOUSING AUTH

PARA-LEGAL TECH (T120)
PARALEGAL
JUSTICE & EVE PA

SURVEY TECH (T125)
TITLE CLERK
R.B. PHARR + ASSC.

AUTO SERVICE (T156)
AUTOMOTIVE TECH
PARKS CHEVROLET/GEO

AUTO SERVICE TECH
GOWEN OLDSMOBILE

AUTO SERVICE TECH
TOYOTA WEST

AUTO TECHNOLOGY (T176)
PART TIME AUTO INS
CPCC

FIELD OPER SUPERVIS
CITY OF CHARLOTTE

MICROCOMP SYS (T192)
SR. EDIT CLERK II
WACHOVIA OPER CENTER

TECH UNDECIDED (T301)
PROGRAMMER/ANALYST
RADIATOR SPECIALTY CO

ASST SERVICE MANAGER
SCOTT CLARK TOYOTA

APPLIANCE MANAGER
SUNBELT MACHINE INC

BIOMEDICAL ENGIN SUP
PRES HOSPITAL

DENTAL ASSISTING (V011)
DENTAL ASSISTANT
DR DEBORAH FOUSHEE

CERT DENTAL ASSISTANT
DR. B. THOMAS ELLIS

COMPUTER OPER (V012)
SYSTEM OPERATOR
GENERAL TIRE

INSURANCE AGENT
STATE FARM

NURSING TECH
PRES HOSPITAL HLTH SVC

DIESEL ENGINEER (V013)
DIESEL MECHANIC
JOEY'S TRUCK + AUTO REP

MACHINIST (V032)
MACHINIST
BALDOR ELECTRIC CO.

MED TRANSCRIPTS (V127)
MED TRANSCRIPTIONIST
CHAR INTERNAL MEDICAL

DATA ENTRY (V129)
DATA ENTRY OPERATOR
CPCC